

United States to observe this day and to recognize the importance of conserving the world's fisheries, sustaining the health of the oceans, and protecting their precious and abundant variety of marine life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7151 of November 20, 1998

National Family Caregivers Week, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As American families enjoy Thanksgiving this year, millions of aging parents and grandparents or relatives with disabilities will be able to join these celebrations because of the loving support of family caregivers. Each day these generous women and men devote their time and energies to care for family members who can no longer live independently or who need assistance to remain in the familiar surroundings of their own homes.

The need for such caregivers in our Nation is growing. We are blessed to live in a time when medicine and technology have helped us live longer; as a result, people 85 years of age and older constitute America's fastest-growing age group. For these older Americans, however, the blessing of longevity also brings with it an increased likelihood of disability and chronic disease, reduced physical and mental agility, and higher risk of injury or illness—all of which create a greater need for care.

Families across our country have quickly responded to this need, but often at great financial, physical, and emotional sacrifice. Family members, working without pay, are the major providers of long-term care in the United States, and half of all caregivers today are over the age of 65 and are often themselves in declining health. Women, who tend to be the primary family caregivers in our society, often must juggle full-time work and family schedules with their caregiving responsibilities.

The contributions that family caregivers make to our society are best gauged by the impact they have in improving the quality of life of the family members for whom they care. Thanks to family caregivers, those they serve retain a measure of independence, remain with friends and relatives, and continue making contributions to our Nation.

This week, as we celebrate Thanksgiving and reflect with gratitude on our many blessings, let us remember to give thanks for the family caregivers among us whose love and care make life brighter for so many and whose dedication and generosity contribute so much to the strength and well-being of our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Con-

stitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 22 through November 28, 1998, as National Family Caregivers Week. I call upon Government officials, businesses, communities, educators, volunteers, and the people of the United States to pay tribute to and acknowledge the heroic efforts of caregivers this special week and throughout the year.

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Of all the blessings that Americans enjoy, our families are perhaps the most precious. It is within the family that we first gain an understanding of who we are and learn to respect the individuality of others. It is to our families that we turn for the unconditional love, acceptance, comfort, and support we need. And it is our families who teach us how to give that love and support to others, helping us to grow into strong, caring adults who can contribute to the well-being of our communities and our world.

In the broad and diverse America of today, families take many different forms, but they all share a need for security and stability. If we are to maintain strong families as the cornerstone of our society and our hope for the future, it is our responsibility as individuals to strengthen and protect our own families—and it is our responsibility as Americans to reach out with compassion to help other families in need.

My Administration has worked hard to help provide America's families with the tools they need to thrive. Our economic policies have brought dignity, security, and opportunity to millions of families by creating new jobs and reducing unemployment.

The most important work, however, is always done in the hearts and homes of individuals. During this week, I encourage all Americans to reflect upon the many blessings of family life and to join in our national effort to promote strong, loving families across our country. By strengthening and supporting the American family, we are ensuring that the future will be bright for our children, our Nation, and the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 22 through November 28, 1998, as National Family Week. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to honor American families with appropriate programs and activities. I encourage educators, community organizations, and religious leaders to celebrate the strength